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THE
FACE OF THE EARTH**

**THE SPIRITANS IN AUSTRALIA
1845-2003**

**COMPILED BY
GERRY GOGAN C. S. Sp.**

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USA Eastern Province

THE SPIRITANS
IN
AUSTRALIA

**AN ACCOUNT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
IN AUSTRALIA 1845 – 2003**

Compiled by

Gerry Gogan C.S.Sp

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Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
INTRODUCTION	5
THE SPIRITANS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA	7
<u>THE SOUND</u>	9
<u>ALBANY</u>	10
<u>MOLLYALUP</u>	12
<u>PARTING</u>	14
<u>OFF TO MAURITIUS</u>	15
<u>TRIBUTE TO THE MOONEY FAMILY</u>	17
<u>WORKING WITH THE SAINT OF MAURITIUS</u>	18
<u>FR. MAURICE BOUCHET – A FORGOTTEN HERO REMEMBERED</u>	19
HOLY GHOST COLLEGE, BALLARAT	24
<u>FOUNDATION OF BALLARAT, IN AUSTRALIA</u>	24
HOLY GHOST FATHERS RETURN TO AUSTRALIA	34
<u>LIBERMANN HOUSE</u>	36
<u>MR. KEV CONWAY - SPIRITAN ASSOCIATE</u>	42
PROFILES OF THE PARISHES WHERE THE SPIRITANS WORK IN AUSTRALIA	43
<u>THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MELBOURNE</u>	43
<u>ARCHDIOCESE OF BRISBANE</u>	47
<u>DIOCESE OF ROCKHAMPTON</u>	49
<u>DIOCESE OF BUNBURY</u>	51
<u>DIOCESE OF GERALDTON</u>	53
<u>PORT HEDLAND</u>	54
APPENDIX 1.A. BALLARAT	57
APPENDIX 1.B. BALLARAT.....	59
APPENDIX 2. WESTERN AUSTRALIA.....	65
<u>CELEBRATING OUR HOMECOMING</u>	70
<u>LAKE MOLLAYALUP</u>	71
<u>SILVER JUBILEE OF SPIRITANS IN AUSTRALIA, 1996</u>	72
SPIRITANS APPOINTED TO AUSTRALIA	72
<u>TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS/HOLIDAY</u>	73
<u>REPLACEMENTS ETC</u>	73
POST SCRIPT:-	74
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	75



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Introduction

When I came to Australia for the first time in 1977 I did not realise then that Australia was one of the first places that Fr. Libermann sent his missionaries of the Most Holy Heart of Mary.

The history of our Australian venture to me mirrors Libermann's own attempts to have his missionary vision accomplished.

After two failed attempts in Western Australia and Ballarat, we are now in the third phase of our endeavour to make our Spiritan Charism fruitful here in the Land of the Holy Spirit.

Like Libermann we keep our Faith in our "more than ordinary devotion" to our Blessed Mother, Our Lady Help of Christians, who is also the Patroness of Australia

THE SPIRITANS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The first indication we have of Spiritan presence in Australia was when the newly consecrated Bishop of Perth in Western Australia, Bishop John Brady went to Ven. Fr. Libermann in 1845 at Amiens.

Fr. Libermann had recently founded the Missionary Society of the Holy Heart of Mary and now it was providential that Bishop Brady should ask him for missionaries for his new Diocese at that time. Fr. Libermann had been experiencing difficulties with the French government who would not allow his priests into the French Colonies because of their opposition to the Holy Spirit Seminary. Bishop Brady had studied at the Holy Spirit Seminary and had been a missionary in Reunion, from where he had gone on to Australia, becoming V.G. to the Archbishop of Sydney. He had been consecrated Bishop of Perth in Rome, and was looking for personnel to staff his new diocese. Fr. Libermann appointed 3 priests and 2 brothers who were included in the 27 priests, brothers and sisters who accompanied Bishop Brady of Perth from Europe.

John Brady was selected to be the first Bishop of the Swan River Colony and ordained in Rome on 18th May 1845. He then went looking for missionaries for his vast Diocese.

In Rome he picked up the Benedictines Salvado and Serra. In Amiens he visited Francis Libermann, founder of the Congregation of the Holy Heart of Mary, later the Holy Ghost Fathers, and assured him that if he supplied the manpower for a

mission, he, the Bishop, would provide the rest. In the end, he gained three priests: Fr. Maurice Bouchet aged 24; Father Francis Victor Thevaux aged 25, and Fr. Francis Thierse, aged 28. Two brothers, Br. Theodore Odon aged 20 and Br. Vincent Eusbe aged 21, both from Bordeaux, were to accompany the priests. It was said in the Seminary that the two from Bordeaux had joined the Congregation to escape military service.

These five, upon whom our story now focuses, were part of a missionary contingent of 28 which set out with the Bishop on the barque "Elizabeth" from Gravesend on September 14th 1845.

They arrived at Cape Town on 24th November.

On December 4th 1845 Father Maurice Bouchet became ill and over the next few weeks lost his mind. By the time they arrived in Freemantle, he was seriously ill and on arrival in Perth on 9th January 1846, he was taken to the hospital and there he died on January 24th. He was buried by special permission of the Governor, behind the Church of St. John the Evangelist, which had been built by Fr. Joostens, but was still incomplete.

On their way to the Church, through the sand tracks, they wondered where all the thousands of Europeans were about whom Brady had spoken, were living, for there were a few scattered homes, no decent roads, one or two shops. The entire population turned out to witness the first Pontifical Mass. There were a few seats, the altar was a discarded shop counter, there was no ceiling in the church, and the flooring was only partly finished. Still, they made the best of what they had and the Church in Perth began its mission.

Bishop Brady's band had been recruited in Europe principally for work amongst the aborigines, who were not as numerous as had been thought. Propaganda had attached to the Diocese of Perth two Vicariates Apostolic, that of Port Essington (close to

Darwin), and King George Sound. Bishop Brady called together all the missionaries, and after hearing the opinion of each one, decided that the best method to work for the conversion of the aborigines was to follow them in their wanderings. The far northern mission he entrusted to Fr. Angelo Confalonieri of the Pallotines, the southern to the French priests of Amiens, and the less remote northern district to the Benedictines. A solemn ceremony of departure was celebrated, and they dispersed.

The Sound

The party for King George Sound left Perth on 8th February 1846. It consisted of the two surviving priests of the Congregation of the Heart of Mary, Francois Thevaux, and Francois Joseph Thierse, and the two lay-brothers, Vincent and Theodore. With them, the Bishop sent Fr. Peter Powell and Timothy Donovan, an Irish ecclesiastical student whom he had taken from his seminary at the beginning of his studies; he anticipated that he would join the Congregation, and expected the French priests to direct his studies.

The evening of their departure Fr. Thierse sent the following description of their new homeland to his mother in Alsace:

"I would like to give you a brief description of New Holland. This country is about seven or eight times the size of France, but it is quite uncivilised. There is none of the beauty of Europe here - no cultivated fields, only awesome forests on every side. There are many Jarrah and other trees which have beautiful flowers, but no fruit. We have only two kinds of edible root, but what is better is a kind of cane, which tastes like chestnuts. I have been eating it these past few days, but somehow it does not seem to agree with me. Still if we lack fruit, we have an abundance of meat. There is a kind

of wild cat here called a kangaroo, which is very plentiful. It is as large as a sheep. The woods are full of birds and the lakes full of swans and pelicans."

Fr. Thierse's preoccupation with the necessities of life was to last as long as they remained in Western Australia. They were tormented by the heat, the flies and the mosquitoes, which allowed them no peace day or night.

Albany

The journey to Albany took eighteen days. Such a journey through the bush must have been exceedingly trying to newcomers to the country, without the benefit of roads, and in the heat of summer, with the shortage of water and abundance of flies and mosquitoes. They traveled through Guildford, then on to York, down to Kojonup and Mount Barker and on to Albany. On the way, they discovered that the Bishop had placed the mission under the control of Fr. Powell who was to see them settled and return home. This was seen by the Missionaries as the first breach of faith by the Bishop. Father Powell rented a house for them for 12 months. They had to pay six months in advance, (eight pounds) and a substantial part of their money was gone. They purchased a few necessary cooking utensils and some provisions and there was only twelve pounds left. They arrived at Albany to find Fr. Joostens there, with the title of "Vicar General of the Sound". There were only about one hundred people in Albany at the time, connected with whaling, fishing, port activities, and the occasional farming. The Catholics consisted of the Mooney family, and a Dr. Harrison, who had neglected the practice of his faith for many years.

Bishop Brady had made a verbal agreement with Fr. Libermann in Amiens that his Congregation should have control of the

Vicariate, and his appointment of Fr. Joostens was a contravention of this agreement. The religious were to concern themselves with the aborigines, while Fr. Joostens would attend to the white population.

Bishop Brady had given the party £30 for their support, but alarming inroads were quickly made into this sum by charges for rent, household utensils, and foodstuffs. As the heat of the summer abated, they went in search of the blacks, but found only little groups with whom they had but fleeting contacts. In the autumn, they went further afield, even as far as Kojonup and other places within a radius of about 100 miles, but found no suitable place. They would not settle until they could find land they could cultivate in a district surrounded by numerous blacks. Meanwhile the winter was moving in, with its cold and wet, and Fr. Thierse suffered from a serious chest complaint. They returned to Albany.

Bishop Brady sent them indignant letters ordering them to establish themselves at Kojonup or some other place distant from Albany, but he sent them neither horse, cart, provisions, nor money. In July, Fr. Powell arrived once more, and helped them eke out their existence with further credit from the storekeeper. When he returned to Perth, he expostulated with the Bishop for the hardships his neglect was causing but to no effect but to incense the Bishop more. Fr. Powell resolved to leave the Diocese, which he did shortly afterwards, ostensibly to seek funds in Batavia. Brother Theodore lost heart and was considered unsuitable for the religious Community. Martin Butler was sent down in his place.

Fr. Theveaux writes to the Bishop on the 7th July 1846: "We are extremely poor, my Lord, with only scanty provisions and but nine shillings in our purse. Furthermore, we cannot rely on the products of the soil for a long time yet. We must have sufficient money to transfer whatever is necessary to our new site."

But assistance came from an unexpected source. A French whaler put into Albany; the generosity of the captain and crew enabled them to pay some of their debts, to replenish their larder, and lay in stocks for a further attempt to make contact with the aborigines.

Mollyalup

Their final choice was Lake Mollyalup, near Mount Barker, about forty miles from Albany. About the middle of October they began clearing the site and shaping timber for the house. Fr. Thierse was again seriously ill. Brother Vincent worked with skill and diligence and it was blessed solemnly on Christmas Day 1846.

"It consists of a Chapel, two small bedrooms, a kitchen, with an alcove for Br. Vincent off the kitchen; the kitchen also serves as our common room. We have now been able to build with great difficulty a chimney from earth and wood, which taxed all the art and industry of Fr. Thierse, because we had no rocks, and the soil would only hold its shape with difficulty and would not keep together against the rain and heat of the fire."

A letter from the Bishop of 8th January 1847, promising some money shortly, enabled them to extend once more their strained credit in Albany; Fr. Thierse wrote from Mollyalup that they were on the brink of starvation:

"We are now completely out of food, and Fr. Thierse wrote to me last week, that at *Santa Maria* he had neither bread nor meat and only a little rice and some frogs which they catch in the grass. I was extremely distressed for my poor

confrère, who has been continually sick, and for Brother Vincent, who is feeling no better."

Already their number was reduced to three, as Brother Theodore found the going too tough and returned to Perth where he was given employment by the Bishop. They had received some unexpected assistance from the Captain of a French whaling boat in the area. The previous August, the whaler had lost its best harpoonist and crew of six sailors in an accident at sea. He had put into Albany to notify the owners of the ship and relatives of the dead. He was surprised to find French speaking missionaries in Albany, and touched by their plight, gave them what he could spare of his provisions. This gave them renewed heart to establish their mission at the Lake.

On January 1st 1847, the two priests returned to the Sound again to collect what their garden had yielded. Two letters awaited them, one from Leandre Fontaine who had joined the Benedictines, and another letter from Brother Theodore. Both letters informed the missionaries that Fr. Angelo Confalonieri and the two catechists who had set out to establish a mission at Port Essington (Darwin) had suffered shipwreck. The priest was saved but the catechists were drowned.

Father Angelo continued his mission to the aborigines and left behind important observations regarding the language and territory of the different tribes in the area. The company of soldiers stationed there fed him and looked after him, but he died within a few years. His grave is near Darwin.

In February 1847 Patrick O'Reilly who had left the colony paid them a visit, as did Mr. Nicolas Caporelli. They learned of the unfavourable reputation the Bishop had in Perth. Later, Fr. Thevaux wrote to Caporelli and the letter or its contents came to the notice of the Bishop who immediately informed Fr. Thevaux

that he should consider himself excommunicated for his disobedience and irreverence towards the Bishop.

Parting

They received further letters from the Bishop in which he indicated his displeasure with them for their disloyalty in writing critical letters to friends in Perth - a charge of which they considered themselves totally innocent. Finally Fr. Thevaux decided to go to Perth to confront him. He left on February 28th, in the heat of summer, borrowing three pounds for his journey; and walking more than half the way, arriving in Perth on March 14th. He requested from the Bishop money, which the Society of the Propagation of the Faith had sent for the mission. He requested fifty or sixty pounds, as he had already incurred a debt with the supplier in Albany, Captain Hassell of sixteen pounds and had other debts for ten pounds. Instead, he only received sixteen pounds, and Fr. Thevaux despaired of getting further funds. He had gone to Perth to put the case for the mission in person, and also to try and have lifted an excommunication, which the Bishop had imposed for some critical observations he made of the Bishop in a letter to Mr. Caporelli. The Bishop told him he would lift the excommunication, but later in an interview, he suspended Fr. Thevaux for his insolence so that he could not celebrate Mass or hear confessions. Bishop Brady also said that he had already committed the mission in the South to the Passionists. Fr. Thevaux said that the Bishop had broken the agreement he had made with the Congregation of the Holy Heart of Mary, and that they would be better employed somewhere else. His Lordship replied that, that was his desire. "Well, then, Monsigneur, you shall be obeyed." Said the missionary. The Bishop gave them £45 each to leave the country and Fr. Thevaux returned to break the news to Fr. Thierse and Brother Vincent. He paid Mr. Hassell sixteen pounds the Bishop had given him, but

Brady had already written to Hassell, the grocer, and told him not to give the mission any further credit. Finally, Fr. Thevaux resolved to return to France to report on the situation; he would conduct his two confreres to Mauritius, where the Congregation had some missions. He asked the Bishop to settle their outstanding debts, and provide them with adequate passage money. This the Bishop eventually promised to do so.

Meantime, at the Mission, Fr. Thierse and Br. Vincent were suffering extreme privation. St. Joseph came to their relief on his feast day, March 19th by sending an abundance of frogs, which were easily caught in the grass. On these they subsisted until Fr. Thevaux brought them some bread. Then the frogs disappeared. Fr. Thevaux returned in time for Easter, April 4th 1847. They stayed as long as provisions lasted and sadly, on June 16th 1847 they left the solitude of "Santa Maria" with as many of their belongings as they could carry. Their journey to Albany was quite a nightmare, being obliged on occasions to wade through water up to their armpits. They were freezing cold and the wind was howling a gale, when "*The Good God in a marvelous manner provided us with fire when we were almost numb with the cold and soaking wet.*" This was a lightning strike of a tree, which split and caught fire just ahead of them.

Off to Mauritius

On July 22nd they were cheerful and happy on board the ship "Eudora".

Their attempts to leave Albany against the trade winds was frustrating for all. They were continually driven back by fierce storms. They set out on August 15th for the second time and made 150 miles. They thought that they were safe, but a violent storm arose and drove them back to the shelter of King George Sound.

They had no sooner set foot on land when someone brought to their humble dwelling a man who was dying. They had met this man some five or six months previously about forty miles from Albany, and had tried to win him back to the practice of his faith, and offered him the Rosary. The man replied that he knew how to read and write, so didn't need the Rosary. Fr. Thierse said that he also knew how to read and write, but said the Rosary every day. The man reluctantly took the beads and said he would be back to make his confession. However, the missionaries left aboard the "Eudora" without sighting the man. Now here he was contrite and happy to receive the Sacraments. *"This is the happiest day in my whole life,"* he said. Since meeting the missionaries he had worn the Rosary around his neck and prayed it several times a day.

The following day the ship set out for the third time from Albany. *"This time we were three weeks at sea, and but for God's help we must have all perished."*

We were driven as on previous occasions, by storms, and after forty eight days since we had first embarked, we were still in Albany." Fr. Thierse was so ill that when the weather changed two days later, and the ship weighed anchor again, Fr. Thierse had to be left behind. He carried on in Albany for the best part of a year evangelizing the natives. He was kept busy. *"The God of mercies deigned to give me some consolation straight away. I was scarcely a quarter of an hour alone when a black woman came to visit me and told me that she wanted me to baptize her. I have given her an hour's instruction every day and I may, perhaps, be able to baptize her on the feast of St. Michael. I have never seen such a zeal for baptism which this good women shows."*

The missionary continues in his letter home, *"Just now, sixty-two natives came to call on me and to tell me that they wished to be friends of that rich Lord who lives on high. And who made the sun and the moon. I must tell him to make for them lots of sugar and flour."*

In a few days time I will go again into the interior, the better to be able to busy myself with the people. I am only going 50 miles at present, but after Christmas I will go as far as 200 miles. The further I advance, the better are the natives as they have no contact with the Europeans."

Tribute to the Mooney Family

What remains to be told is the tribute Fr. Thierse paid to the Mooney family who looked after him during his year in Australia waiting for a passage to Mauritius.

"There is only one Catholic family here in King George Sound. This wonderful man and his wife and children has already given me a sack of flour and has lent me another and now he has come to me with 25 francs and told me that if he were not so poor with his seven children that he would have liked to have given me ten times that amount. This poor fellow has had to endure hunger along with all his family in order to help me. You don't know how hard it is for me to take anything from him. They give me all the money they can, and in their charity, never fail to find something to give me. When I arrived from the bush I was half-dead, for I only had a little bread, four potatoes and three eggs to carry me through my journey of ten days. A mother could not have cared for her children better than that family looked after me. They all slept on the floor in order to give me a decent bed. As I was in the grip of a fever I was forced to accept their offer and remain there ten days. Tomorrow I will start off again on another trip into the bush, but I won't be as sick going as I was on arriving, for the same family has given me a bottle of brandy, and the wife gave me a pie, a few herrings and several eggs."

The Resident Magistrate had given Mr. Mooney a blue riding

coat, which Mrs. Mooney altered for Fr. Thierse. It is not difficult to picture him wearing this blue coat as he stood waving a fond farewell to the Mooney's from the deck of the "Apenteur" which took him to Mauritius in 1848.

Working with the Saint of Mauritius

Both priests arrived in Mauritius, Fr. Thevaux in October 1847, and almost a year later, Fr. Thierse, arrived in Port Louis with Brother Vincent. The latter was posted to Reunion but left the Congregation and his later life remains unknown.

Fr. Laval, the Apostle of Mauritius, requested that they be allowed to remain there to assist his work, and his request was granted. The young missionaries gave themselves to the work with great zeal. Fr. Thevaux's first task was to preach in the Cathedral of Port Louis the Jubilee year proclaimed by Pius IX on his accession to the papacy in 1847. The proceeds of the collection went to put a roof on the newly constructed church at Petite Riviere, where Fr. Thevaux said Mass on Christmas of 1847 and where he ended his days. The chapel was dedicated to The Holy Heart of Mary. From 1852 - 1858

Fr. Thevaux was parish priest of Pamplémousses. Father Thierse was assistant at the Cathedral of Saint Louis and became the friend and helper to Fr. Laval. He went home to France to recuperate from his intense labours in 1852 and returned in 1854 completely restored to health, to the obvious delight of the Mauritians who loved him. His return coincided with an outbreak of cholera, which claimed 15,000 victims on the island in the month of June. Fr. Thevaux became very ill, as did Fr. Lambert another Missionary from the Congregation, but both survived.

Later, both Fr. Thierse and Fr. Thevaux credited Fr. Laval's

professional skill and holiness for their individual cures. Fr. Thierse received an overnight cure from several abscesses, which had become infected. Father Laval dressed the wounds and next day there was hardly a sign that they had existed. Fr. Thevaux was being advised to have his leg amputated by his doctors and he was in agreement with decision, when Fr. Laval came into the room and advised against it. Fr. Thevaux took his advice and recovered the use of his leg.

Fr. Thevaux returned to the cathedral parish to assist Fr. Laval in later years and was with the saint when he died on 9th September 1864. He left a very touching account of the death of the holy man. He later went to the parish of Petite Rivere, and there he was buried in 1878 with Fr. Beaud and Fr. Lambert in a tomb erected by "*grateful and sorrowing parishioners*".

Fr. Thierse was appointed parish priest of Grand Port where he died in 1880, mourned by his devoted parishioners who erected a large and beautiful monument over his grave next to the Church of St. Mary of the Angels, Mahebourg. Fr. Powell, after some years of service in South Australia and Victoria, became the first Parish Priest of the North Shore in Sydney. He died in Belgium in 1872.

Fr. Maurice Bouchet – A Forgotten Hero Remembered

Fr. Walter Mc Namara C.S.Sp.

One of the tragic failures of Fr. Libermann's Congregation of the Holy Heart of Mary was the Australian venture of 1846 to 1848. A brave young group of three priests, Frs. Thierse, Thevaux and Maurice Bouchet and two Brothers, Vincent and Theodore set out from London in September 1847. They were part of Bishop Brady's apostolic band of 27 missionaries – priests, brothers, seminarians and sisters destined for Perth, Western Australia. The

newly consecrated Bishop John Brady, a native of Cavan, Ireland, and educated at the Holy Ghost seminary in Paris promised them a fertile mission field of over half a million Aborigines, thousands of Catholics and hundreds of children waiting for Catholic schools. (The reality was a population of approximately three hundred Catholics, all of the poorer class, and small bands of nomadic aborigines, a couple of thousand across the whole state: one child turned up for school on the opening day.)

Fr. Maurice Bouchet was the first casualty of this Way of the Cross – as Bishop Brady's ambitious mission proved to be. The Bishop himself was eventually dismissed by Rome and left Perth in disgrace in 1852. Meanwhile all his priests had deserted him, the Spanish Benedictines eventually returning to succeed him. An Irish catechist was accidentally shot dead at New Norcia two others were shipwrecked and drowned in a catastrophic mission to Darwin, the surviving Fr. Confalonieri dying there of malaria a year later. The other seminarians, brothers and secular priests eventually all scattered and left the mission. Only the Benedictine monks and the Divine Mercy Sisters persevered – to survive until today. Fr. Thierse and Thevaux ended up in Mauritius with Père Laval.

The troubles of Fr. Libermann's missionaries began as soon as the party set sail from Gravesend. Their clothing promised by Bishop Brady was locked away in the hold. After weeks of "extreme suffering" caused by being unable to change their underwear, their plight was relieved by the skill of the Sisters adapting some supplies and the bishops shirts to their needs. The warning signs appeared early on with the bishop censoring all letters. His authoritarian rule manifested itself from the beginning. After the relief of a stopover in Capetown and being able to smuggle a few letters past the bishop the Cross came again as Fr. Bouchet fell a victim to sunstroke shortly after setting sail on the final leg of the journey to Perth. The account of his sufferings is very moving. In his delirium his confreres bled him and physically restrained him

using force! He raved and he embarrassed those who sought to comfort him. He expressed interior desolation believing himself to be damned but also prophesied that he would die on arrival in Australia and promised great suffering and the Cross for his confreres. He even foretold the fate of Bishop Brady and expressed his motives and ambitions. The bishop did not come back to visit him again on his sickbed.

On arrival in Perth Fr. Bouchet was transferred to hospital where the doctor at first offered hope with the assurance of recovery. By January 23rd the eve of his death, the inner struggles had ceased. His spiritual purification accomplished, a heavenly peace descended on him. He recited the words of the psalm "Laetatus sum in his quae dicta sunt mihi; in domum domini ibimus." ("I rejoiced when I heard them say, we will go into the house of the lord"). He went on to say "I see Jesus, Mary and Joseph!" and added "oh! and few will be saved! - only those who have honoured the Blessed Trinity". His saintly death astonished all present but gave great consolation to his confreres in their loss. Dying on the 24th January in the small hours of the morning, on the third day he was buried on the 26th. "In spite of the excessively hot weather during that time not only did no unpleasant odour come from his body but his countenance appeared brighter than when alive" (Fr. Thevaux's letter).

After an Office presided by the Bishop and Requiem Mass said by Fr. Thevaux, Fr. Bouchet was buried in the grounds behind the Chapel by special permission from the Governor, as there was no Catholic burial ground. Nor were there the resources for the luxury of a burial stone or marker. The infant Church of Perth had other concerns and struggles. Despite protests in the Catholic press fifty years later at the lack of respect for his grave by the absence of any marker or gravestone, it would take a hundred and fifty four years before a burial plaque was finally erected in December 2000 AD.

In the meantime the grave was "lost". Six Mercy Sisters who died

in the early days of the church and were buried alongside Fr. Bouchet were later disinterred and their remains moved to the adjacent convent grounds. Where precisely Fr. Bouchet's mortal remains were buried, or whether they were translated with those of the sisters intrigued recent historians and archivists. Various opinions were expressed but no evidence was available to throw light on the whereabouts of the grave of the first priest to die in Western Australia. Nor was he remembered much by his Spiritan confreres who preferred to forget about the Australian venture and get on with the canonisation of *Perè Laval*.

The local Church in Western Australia finally began to research its early history and its indebtedness to the forgotten pioneers. In the nineteen sixties the site of the mission hut at Lake Mollyalup was found and the foundations of the building excavated. The treasured rosary beads of Fathers Thevaux and Thierse came to light appropriately inscribed "*Mere du Dieu Priez pour nous*" ("*Mother of God pray for us*") on the reverse side of the crucifix. The full details of the suffering of these heroic forebears of the modern Spiritans came to light as Fr. Noel Fitzsimons meticulously researched the correspondence and reports from Perth in the 1840s at the archives in Paris and Perth. The subsequent ministry and labours of Frs. Thevaux and Thierse in Mauritius was acknowledged and their graves there photographed and visited. But where was Fr. Maurice Bouchet?

This was the question I put to Mons. Keating, the vicar general, when I heard the story on my first visit to Albany and lake Mollyalup in 1990. Visits to the archives of the Archdiocese and of the Mercy Sisters in Victoria Square revealed a keen awakening of interest in this chapter of early local Church history. Sister Frances Stibi PBVM, Archdiocesan archivist espoused the cause of the lost grave and appealed for scientific assistance.

An article about the search in the local Catholic weekly, The

Record, was noticed by an official of a mining research company. A.I. Technologicse Pty. Ltd., offered to scan the ground with Surface penetrating Radar. On the south side of St. John's Pro-Cathedral, in the grounds of Mercedes College, the clear outlines of two graves were found. Traces of metal were detected in one of the graves, the profession cross of Fr. Maurice Bouchet! The other grave was identified from historical records as that of John O'Reilly, a sub-deacon from Ireland who died shortly after Fr. Bouchet.

The burial plaques for Fr. Bouchet and John O'Reilly were finally erected and blessed by Bishop Healy, Auxiliary Bishop of Perth on 6th December 2000. On the 29th of the same month the annual Spiritan assembly closed with con-celebrated Mass in memory of Fr. Maurice Bouchet at the Pro-Cathedral led by Archbishop Barry James Hickey of Perth. Bishop Quinn of Bunbury, Bishop Bianchini of Geraldton and Bishop Healy (auxiliary of Perth) also celebrated. Abbot Placid Spearitt of New Norcia represented the Benedictine Monks. Frs. John Fogarty, Assistant Superior General of the Spiritans and Mike Onwuemeli Second Assistant with Spiritans from all over Australia and Papua New Guinea with other clergy and religious also con-celebrated the Mass. The Mercy Sisters were represented and laity from Albany and Perth attended. Fr. John Fogarty spoke at the graveside memorial service of the new crew of modern day Spiritans in Oceania whose sails are filled with the same Spirit that inspired Fr. Bouchet. The testimony of his heroic exterior and interior sufferings and his saintly death are an invaluable source of inspiration to his Spiritan family and the Church of Western Australia. May he rest in peace.

HOLY GHOST COLLEGE, BALLARAT

Ballarat is one of the main gold rush towns of Victoria, Australia. Many of the goldminers were Irish and having done so well, they wished for the best in the education of their children. In view of this, they entrusted Bishop James Moore of Ballarat to engage a staff of priest educators for the secondary school they intended to fund.

Bishop Moore on a trip to Ireland enquired of his uncle who was a canon in Booterstown Co. Dublin, where he should look. His uncle is said to have replied: "No better place than the French College at Blackrock" which had obtained the best results in education since they had arrived in Ireland. So Bishop Moore recruited 12 Fathers under the leadership of Fr. Reffé.

Foundation of Ballarat, in Australia

(Decision of 14th August 1888, extract from B. G. T. XIV No. 20, September 1888)

For many times during the past several years, the question of setting up a house in Australia has been discussed. Providence has just offered us the opportunity of realising these projects already conceived by our Venerable Father.

The Bishop of Ballarat, Bishop James Moore, wants to set up, a

catholic college in his diocese; and being well acquainted with our fathers at Blackrock and Rockwell, he is keen to hand over to our Congregation the work and planning he has in mind. Last January he was in Rome to be present at the festivities organised to celebrate Pope Leo XIII's Sacerdotal Jubilee. He found out that our Father General was also present, and hastened to speak to him of his intentions. Then, several days later, he submitted to him in writing, a memorandum dated 9th January. For the college, His Lordship was offering to hand over to us an entire property of 2 hectares, purchased for this purpose, together with the building he had already constructed. At the same time, he was proposing an important mission in the diocese, and promised his complete support for the two projects. Another most important advantage, for us especially, whose members for the most part are in inhospitable countries, is that Ballarat is situated in the best and most attractive part of Australia.

To such benevolent offers, only one difficulty can be raised - that of available personnel - however, the Most Reverend Father General promised his Lordship that he would submit the matter to his Council.

During March, Bishop Moore, passing through Paris, sought the response to his propositions and took great pains to have them accepted. But on account of the many needs of our present works, the Council did not think it opportune to grant his request.

The Prelate meantime did not accept defeat. Other religious congregations impressed by his generous offer, made many repeated overtures to him to realise their ends. But His Lordship wanted no other than the Holy Spirit Fathers and of the Holy Heart of Mary. His Grace, Archbishop Carr of Melbourne, his Metropolitan, had written to him personally, forbidding him to invite other congregations. During May Bishop Moore paid a visit to our fathers at Blackrock, making new proposals, further

adding to his previous requests more generous proposals. Father Huvétys wrote to the Mother House, advising the fathers of the community, noting the rather special features of this foundation from the point of view of our works in Ireland, of which Australia is to some degree an extension; indeed some refer to it as a second Ireland. He added that vocations to the priestly and religious life were numerous, and that, as a consequence we could confidently expect to see, generously compensated, the sacrifices in personnel which would be required.

At this juncture, the Superior General, as reported in the Bulletin, went to visit our houses in Ireland. He spoke again with Bishop Moore, who once again renewed even more vigorously his invitation. Back at the Mother House, the Sup. Gen. put the matter once more to the Council, and this time concluded that the Bishops invitation and generosity be accepted - at the meeting and agreement of 14th August last, the Vigil of the Assumption. A special agreement meeting was drawn up in this regard, with Bishop Moore. This was signed by him in Paris on 12th September 1888 as he was on his way to Australia.

According to his Lordships proposals, we should have two works:

A college or an educational house in the Episcopal City of Ballarat, and, another at Maryborough for the parish needs of mission stations depending on it.

The Superior General has put the principal community, that of Ballarat, under the invocation of the Holy Spirit, and the Maryborough house under that of the Holy Name of Mary.

B.G. TXV. Bulletin '35 Nov. 1888

P424.Novitiate

Australia Fathers Croagh and Schmidt have happily reached Ballarat in the early days of October. The arrival of this reinforcement has produced a most favourable impression for our works. Shortly afterwards, Bishop Moore held a diocesan synod in which Fr. Reffé and Fr. Lemire took part. All the priests of the diocese, together on this occasion at Ballarat, all encouraged our confreres with their lively support.(..... Fr. Reffé, 11/10/89)

Their tenure of engagement lasted only from 1889 - 1892. The reasons for their withdrawal are said to be - internal dissension among the Irish, French and German staff, lack of strong leadership, and misunderstandings with the local bishop, which "only men of commonsense would have put right in half an hour" -(footnote in Henry Koren's *"To The Ends of the Earth"* - p.315)

The abandonment of this work meant that the Congregation would have no province in Australia." Your fathers have made a mistake in withdrawing from the college" wrote Cardinal Moran in 1892.

Bishop Moore then engaged the Irish Christian Brothers to take over the College. They didn't make the same mistake as the Spiritans - having been apprised of Bishop Moore's attitudes by our fathers. The result is that the Holy Ghost College, now St. Patrick's College, Ballarat is the premier Catholic College in Victoria.

As 1892 marked the departure of the Holy Ghost Community from Victoria, 1977 marks their return to pastoral activity in Melbourne. We have renewed our acquaintance with Ballarat; the brothers are very welcoming when our fathers visit, and remember with appreciation the initial efforts our fathers made at this great college.

A wonderful and gracious landmark in this history was the invitation by the Brother Provincial to our local superior at the time, Fr. Des Reid, C.S.Sp. to be the principal celebrant and homilist at the centenary celebrations of the college in 1992. "*ad*

multos annos"

The following extract from the General Bulletin of the Holy Ghost Fathers gives a detailed description of the Foundation of Ballarat, and the initial history of the inauguration of the Community.

BG. TXV Bull. No51 March 1889

Ballarat

AUSTRALIA

Community of the Holy Spirit at Ballarat November 1888 - March 1891

1. Personnel
 2. Arrival of the Priests
 3. Opening Ceremony
 4. Visits of Messers Dillon and Thomas Esmonde
 5. Present stage of the Endeavour
-
1. The general bulletin (August 1888) has already outlined the reasons leading to the acceptance of the Ballarat endeavour. In September 1888 the Mother House sent the following personnel:- Fr. Reffé, Superior; Fathers Lemire, Carrol Griffin, Patrick Brennan, and Bernard Carey; Brothers Vincent, Adhelme, Gontran and Alphonsus. Since then, Fr. Laininger was also sent out there on 1st June 1889; Br. Basilé, on 1st April of the same year; Fathers Croagh and Christian Schmidt on 1st September 1889; Br. Cornélié on 1st April 1890. On the other hand Fr. Carey came back to Europe on 1/7/1890, Fr. Reffé on 19/9/1890. Fr. Lee, who replaced the latter as Superior, left from Naples on 1/11/90.
 2. In the absence of further information in the Bulletin we are supplying several details of the arrival of our confrères, and their early efforts to commence their work; and some extracts

from Fr. Lemire's diary of the voyage, and of his correspondence with the Community.

" Friday 19th November 1889, we landed at Melbourne at half past eight in the morning. We spent the day with His Grace the Archbishop. The following day, Saturday, we set out for Ballarat with our Bishop James Moore, the Redemptorist Fathers and Religious. The railway journey from Melbourne to Ballarat took 3 hours. An immense crowd was awaiting us. As soon as the train came to a halt, there was a rush to the Bishop's carriage door, from which he alighted. Immediately there was an enthusiastic hurrah, one of those loud and prolonged acclamations - one of those "cheers" that can only come from Irish breasts reverberating for several minutes. We were deeply touched and there were tears in our eyes. Hats, handkerchiefs, umbrellas, - all of them being waved above their heads. The combined voices caused quite a commotion at the station. Some fifteen conveyances lined up outside. The Bishop took his place, with his priests and the newcomers, the procession headed for the Cathedral. The streets were crowded. The Protestants looked upon us with kindly interest. Although they have the greatest numbers and influence in Ballarat, they are by no means hostile, and they profess their great regard for the Catholic Bishop. He has earned this esteem by his openness, honesty and implacable courage in affirming, in season and out of season, the due rights of Catholics. He is the most influential man in Ballarat. Wherever he is, he is given the place of honour. He is given precedence over the Anglican bishops, Presbyterians and others; and what he says is always heeded with respect.

The Procession came to the door of the Cathedral. As we entered the nave, the choir intoned the "Te Deum", and the congregation joined in with one voice. Then the Vicar General, in the name of all the clergy welcomed His Lordship. Four

addresses were read next, one after the other, on behalf of the parishioners. His Lordship took his place on the Episcopal Chair, thanking his clergy and his parishioners, stressing the happiness he experienced seeing that the unity between the clergy and the faithful had no way lessened during his absence. Then he spoke of the Old Country, the Motherland of Ireland, of her sufferings and great trials. During his allocution the whole congregation was visibly moved, especially when the Bishop called upon them never to forget the land of their birth, the holy ground of Ireland. "Because to forget Ireland" he said, "was the first step towards the loss of the Catholic Faith"

His Lordship came down from the chair, and Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament was the final act of this solemn gathering. Today, Ballarat is city of 65,000 people. The streets are quite wide. The one where we live is wider than the famous avenue of Paris; it contains four rows of trees. Many of the houses are made of timber, for, of all materials, it costs the cheapest here. The climate is dry.

3. A country paper, the "Ballarat Star", gives the following details concerning the beginning (inauguration) of the work.

"Yesterday (19th February 1889) the inauguration of the new college conducted by the Fathers of the Holy Spirit and of the Holy Heart of Mary, took place. A branch of the order is already well established at Blackrock (Dublin). The college, a wooden construction, covers an area of half an acre; it was commenced on the 2nd January this year. The buildings consisting of two large wings forming a rectangle, includes a dormitory for the older lads, 80 feet long by 26 feet wide; another dormitory for the younger boys of 45 feet long and 26 feet wide; both fully furnished, with marble wash basins etc.; a dining room, 56 feet by 26 feet; a study hall, 42 feet by 20 feet; a chapel, 50 feet by 24 feet; classrooms, bath rooms,

infirmaries and private rooms. The interior façade of the rectangle, is surrounded by a glassed in corridor, 12 feet wide which can be used for teaching especially in summer. There is hot and cold water for the baths and wash basins. The floor to ceiling height is approximately 20 feet. The rooms are excellently ventilated, with Venetian windows and shutters".

The solemn opening of the building was followed by a dinner, which was attended by a large number of priests and lay people, and included His Grace the Archbishop of Melbourne. Before dinner the guests were assembled in a spacious room, where His Lordship the Bishop and Fr. Reffé the Principal, wished all a hearty welcome. His Lordship, firstly addressing the Archbishop of Melbourne:

" In my own name, he said, and in the name of Reverend Father Reffé and of the priests of the Holy Spirit, as well as in the name of the priests and faithful of my own diocese, I express to you, your Grace, our most sincere thanks for your kindness in readily joining us today in our inauguration ceremony, despite the burdensome and urgent nature of your duties; and so, the mark of esteem you bestow upon us, makes us profoundly grateful. Without exaggeration, I can say that the presence of so many distinguished persons gives me very great pleasure. I want to thank you most sincerely for your presence, and assure you by accepting Fr. Reffé's invitation, you have bestowed on me a mark of esteem and sympathy that I gratefully acknowledge. It would be pointless for me to try and conceal the mixed feelings of pride and joy I am experiencing on this present occasion with the opening of this College, accomplished in most favorable circumstances, under the most promising auspices. I see today the realisation of the hope I nurtured for many years.

From this day on, I shall have the happiness of knowing that in my diocese we shall have every possibility of providing our

young people with a complete and rounded education. Our primary schools are in the hands of excellent teachers; the Brothers of Christian Doctrine, do indeed, uphold here, as everywhere else, the standards of their Institute. However, up until now, a most important sector of our education remained, if not completely, almost absent. If we wanted to content ourselves with appearances, we could have gone with the current; but we believed the temporal and spiritual good of our young people required our effort to snatch them from the demoralising influence of a weak and harmful education. We preferred to go on working until we were able to procure a good education for them. I haven't the slightest doubt that before long, our college will show itself worthy of our solicitude. I have even the very highest hopes for its success. As a guarantee of this I call to mind the results obtained in the various branches of advanced studies at Blackrock College. Fr. Reffé and his devoted priestly colleagues, bring with them for this new Endeavour, the same proven system and spirit of work. In a very short time they will be obtaining similar results".

After the Bishop's address Mons. Heynes read an address to Rev. Fr. Reffé, College Principal, on behalf of the Priests of the Diocese. He concluded by offering him on behalf of these latter, a sum of 1,132 pounds sterling the result of a collection among themselves.

Fr. Reffé thanked His Lordship (Grace) and priests of the diocese as well as everyone present, for the great kindness; then he outlined the College's program and the spirit in which it will be carried out.

At the dinner, which followed, Father Superior had on his right the Archbishop of Melbourne, and on his left the Bishop of Ballarat. Several other bishops and other distinguished persons

were included in the gathering.

The first toast was offered by Rev. Fr. Reffé to His Grace the Archbishop of Melbourne. His Grace responded in a spiritual and most pleasant manner. Then Fr. Reffé offered a second toast to the Founder of the College, the Bishop of Ballarat. His Lordship responded, expressing his pleasure which was his in seeing the College opened. It was heart-warming seeing the favorable impression created by its personnel. Assuredly, he added, with the co-operation of the clergy and faithful, success will be obtained.

There was a further toast to the Secular Priests to which Fr. Heynes responded; then a toast to the Religious Priests, to which Fr. O'Farrell and Prior Butler responded; and a toast to the Laity, with respondents Messers Brophy and Coghlan, Knights of St. Gregory the Great.

Finally, The Archbishop of Melbourne proposed the health of the Principal, in an eloquent and flattering discourse, to which Fr. Reffé responded with conviction and feeling.

The opening celebration which had begun with a religious ceremony was likewise concluded with a prayer.

4. Mr. Dillon and Sir Thomas Esmonde had been sent to Australia to collect funds to assist the Irish Farmers in their struggle against their landlords. They were welcomed throughout Australia in princely fashion. On their visit to Ballarat they came to visit the College, accompanied by Bishop Moore and notables of the City. A reception, though somewhat improved, was tended them with much success.

5. The present state of the "endeavour" is revealed in the subsequent pages.

HOLY GHOST FATHERS RETURN TO AUSTRALIA

1971 - to Queensland
1977 - to Victoria
1991 - to New South Wales
1992 - to Western Australia

Before the present involvement of the Spiritans in Australia, in the 1950's. Fr. Seamus O'Colmain spent six months at least visiting various dioceses in Australia with a view to our coming here again.

At the same time the Irish Province was looking for an involvement in English speaking Canada. (The Spiritans were already in French speaking Canada from very early days) So, the Canadian venture was preferred, and we had to wait until 1971 to make another effort in Australia.

This came about due to the large number of priests who had to leave Nigeria after the Biafran Civil War. There were 301 members of the Irish Province available for redeployment. Many invitations came from all over the missionary world, and one of those was from Papua New Guinea.

Fr. William Butler went to the Diocese of Mt. Hagen in the Highlands, and we eventually sent a team of men to work there. At the same time, it was considered a good thing to have a presence in Australia to support our mission in P.N.G., and Frs. John Daly, Michael Clifford, and Tim O'Driscoll were asked to visit different dioceses in Australia. Finally, they chose and were invited to the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

In 1971, Frs. George Lahiffe, Tom Crean, Tom Byrne and later

James Murray came to Brisbane.

Fr. Lahiffe became the Parish Priest of St. Michael's, Dorrington and leader of the group until 1978.

In 1974, Fr. Tom Crean was asked by Archbishop Rush to open a new parish at Pine Rivers, which he did with great success. The people of these parishes have shared in the spirit of "*Cor Unum*" which has been very instrumental in developing a great spirit of community which is much appreciated.

In 1977, we approached the Archbishop of Melbourne for a parish. We were offered the choice of four parishes with secondary schools. We chose the parish of Ringwood, and a Catholic Regional secondary school, Aquinas College. There seemed to be a misunderstanding regarding our commitment to the college. For our part we wished to assess the organisation and management of the school before accepting the offer.

Four priests, two for the parish - Fr. Hubert Fagan and Con Peelo; and two for the school - Fr. Ronan Grimshaw and Fr. Sean O'Connell were appointed to Ringwood. After four to six months it became clear to us that the management of the school was not a feasible option in our considerations, so we opted out of participation in the school. This caused a lot of disappointment to the parishioners and to the Diocese as they had been under the impression that we had already accepted the management of the school.

However, we stayed on in the parish and since we have been there, we have enjoyed the same kind of community support stemming from our own "*Cor Unum*" Spirit which, as in Pine Rivers and Dorrington has been very much appreciated and enjoyed by the parishioners of Our Lady's, Ringwood. Our main purpose as missionaries has been to establish a presence and eventually a province for this Pacific Region with a view

looking into the next century.

In 1995, we had the wonderful grace and consolation of having our first ever Australian Spiritan ordained - a former parishioner of Our Lady's, Ringwood - Fr. Paul Leyden.

LIBERMANN HOUSE

In 1987, we purchased a former presbytery at Jordanville, Chadstone Victoria, as our own community house.

We started off with Libermann House being a place of formation for aspirants, who would lodge there under a director, Fr. Paul Walsh, while studying or working during the day.

Fr. Leyden has been the only successful candidate so far. In recent years we have made Libermann House a place of prayer and relaxation for our confreres and prayer groups. Prospective aspirants more recently just spend a few days at a time in this atmosphere. We still have hopes.

In 1991, we sought a presence in New South Wales and Bishop Bede Heather of Parramatta offered St. Monica's Parish. Fr. Gerry Ryan is the present Parish Priest.

In 1994, we had received our second aspirant, Samie Buttigieg, who is currently in formation in Ireland.

At present, in 1995, we also have two priests in the Diocese of Geraldton, in Western Australia.

So to sum up, we are located in four of the seven States/Territories of Australia.

1971 - St Michael's Dorrington, Queensland

Fr. Frank Comerford, C.S.Sp., Parish Priest and Local Superior.



Sanctuary and Altar, Our Lady's Church, Ringwood, Victoria



Holy Spirit Church, Pine Rivers, Queensland



Mass at Mollayalup site of 1st Spiritans in Australia 1847



Homecoming to Mollayalup, 1997



Fr. Paul Leyden with Fr. Gerry Gogan, 8th October 1998⁵



Paul Leyden's Ordination Day 8/10/1998⁵, Our Lady's, Ringwood



St. Augustine's Church Maryborough, Victoria



Tombstone of Rev. Patrick Brennan

- 1974 - Holy Spirit, Pine Rivers, Queensland
Fr. Paul Walsh, C.S.Sp., Parish Priest
- *1977 - Our Lady's Ringwood, Victoria
Fr. Paul Hopper, C.S.Sp., Parish Priest
- 1987 - Libermann House, Chadstone, Victoria
Fr. Michael Daly, C.S.Sp.
- 1992 - St. Monica's, Parramatta, New South Wales
Fr. Gerry Ryan, C.S.Sp., Parish Priest
- 1992 - St. Cecilia's, Port Hedland, Western Australia
Fr. Walter McNamara, C.S.Sp., Parish Priest
- 1995 - Villa La Salle, Southport, Queensland
Fr. Gerry Gogan, C.S.Sp., Chaplain
- 1995 - Our Lady Help of Christians, Northampton, Western Australia
Fr. Des Reid, C.S.Sp., Parish Priest
Fr. Tom Crean, C.S.Sp.
- 1998 - Spiritan House, Pine Rivers, Queensland
- 1998 - St. John the Baptist, South Hedland, Western Australia
Fr. Neal Shank, C.S.Sp.
- 1999 - St. Joseph's Albany, Western Australia
Fr. Paschal Kearney C.S.Sp.
- 1999 - St. Martin de Porres, Woorabinda, Queensland
Fr. Pat McGeever C.S.Sp.
- 2000 - St. Patrick's, Guildford, New South Wales
Fr. Gerry Ryan C.S.Sp.
- 2000 - St. Matthew's, Windsor, New South Wales
Fr. Paul Hopper C.S.Sp.
- 2000 - St. John the Baptist, South Hedland, Western Australia
Fr. Simon Emeanuo, C.S.Sp.

* (In 1996, Our Lady's Ringwood, where we had been since 1977, returned to Diocesan Administration)

Here in Australia we are literally at the "ends of the earth", but in

the spirit of Ven. Fr. Libermann we have faith in what the Lord is asking of us here, and intend, God willing to continue, - always hoping that the Lord will provide as we do His work here in the "Land of the Holy Spirit" - as Australia was christened by the first Portuguese explores who came across this continent centuries ago.

MR. KEV CONWAY - Spiritan Associate

Since the Spiritans arrived in Brisbane in 1971, Mr. Kevin Conway, who was one of our first supporters in the formation and development of Holy Spirit Parish at Pine Rivers, has become an associate Spiritan. He has dedicated his life to our missionary effort, especially since the death of his dear wife, Beverley. He has become a real tower of strength, animating the community in the spirit of "Cor Unum". He has spent over 12 years since Holy Spirit became a viable and community oriented Parish, doing missionary work in P.N.G. Using his natural skills and practical experiences as carpenter, electrician and builder, he has been responsible for Mission houses, Convents, schools, etc., in our various localities. He has grown to be a real associate member of the Congregation in all but name. We thank God for having given us Kevin as a confrere, and hope that he will be with us for many years to come.

PROFILES OF THE PARISHES WHERE THE SPIRITANS WORK IN AUSTRALIA

The Archdiocese of Melbourne

Our Lady's Ringwood

The Spiritans came to Ringwood in 1977 and returned the parish to the Diocese in 1996.

Parish priests during this period were; Frs. Hugh Fagan, Gerry Gogan, Tom Crean and Paul Hopper. Our approach as newcomers in Australia and as Spiritans brought an easy freshness and broader understanding to the community, which stemmed from our being missionaries, this was often commented on, it also made for a good collaboration ministry in keeping with the teachings of Vatican II.

The Parish Directory gives an overview of the various parish groups, which were increased and developed under the Spiritan Charism.

PARISH DIRECTORY 2000

Liturgy

Altar Servers

Ministers of the Eucharist (Church)

Readers

Ministers of the Eucharist
(Sick)

Music Ministry

Our Lady's Choir

Youth Choir

Junior Choir

Our Lady's Singers

Folk Group

Altar Care/Flowers

Church Cleaning

Children's Liturgy

PARISH SUPPORT AND MISSION

Baptism Preparation

Godstart

Government Schools Apostolate

R.C.I.A.

Centacare – Catholic Family
Services

Catholic Solo Parents

Open Door

Knights of the Southern Cross

Building and Maintenance

Hall Hire

Fete Committee

Interchurch Group

The Marian Magazine

Home and Hospital Visitation

St. Vincent de Paul

Transport Assistance

Counters

Finance Committee

Fundraising & Raffles

Parish Barbecue

PRAYER

Confraternity of the Holy Spirit

Dial-Prayer

Prayer & Spiritual Working Group

Novena to Our Lady of
Perpetual Succour

SCHOOLS:

Aquinas College

Our Lady's

SOCIAL/SUPPORT

Playgroup

Family Group

Youth Council

Young Adults

Teams of Our Lady

Time Out

Out of this is shown the Face of Christ to each other with a share of Spiritan charism. We also developed a very happy relationship with the priests of the neighbouring parishes, initiating a weekly lunch where we share ideas and socialize.

We were saddened at having to leave Our Lady's, where we had made such lasting friendships. We hope that our new venture at

St. Dominic's, Broadmeadows, with Frs. Ned Purcell and Jim Hurley will also grow with the grace of the Holy Spirit shown in our Spiritan charism.

St. Dominic's Parish, Broadmeadows Fr. Eamon Purcell
C.S.Sp.

Fr. Jim Hurley C.S.Sp.

Expressions of Spiritan interest in resuming parish work in the Archdiocese of Melbourne were favourably received, with very positive references to the impression made by the Spiritans in Ringwood during their tenure of Our Lady's Parish.

Archbishop Pell and his Vicar General, Bishop Denis Hart, offered the pastoral care of St. Dominic's Parish, Broadmeadows to the Spiritans in late 2000. At the end of the year the Australian Group Assembly at Safety bay, Western Australia, accepted this new ministry in principle. Ministry in this parish was considered to be well in accord with the Spiritan charism and vocation. It is a cross-cultural ministry in a somewhat derived area with a high proportion of immigrants and children of immigrants. The Vietnamese, who are the biggest single group of immigrants in the parish, are looked upon as a good source of possible vocations, so this undertaking was seen as a likely step towards the development of the Congregation in this country.

Acceptance was soon confirmed to the Archdiocese and on the 21st February 2001 Fr. Eamon Purell as Parish Priest and Fr. Jim Hurley as Assistant took over the pastoral care of St. Dominic's parish, Broadmeadows.

The welcome from the people was warm and has continued t be so, especially when the parishioners realised the Spiritans had come here by choice and intended to be here for a relatively long haul.

The following profiles are taken from Fr. John Fogarty and Fr. Mike Onwumeli's Visitation Report December 2000.

Libermann House, Melbourne: Fr. Ned Purcell C.S.Sp.

From the 19th of December I was in Melbourne. I was met at the airport by Ned Purcell who has been in Libermann house for over a year now. This house served as the formation house of the group. The house was bought from the Archdiocese of Melbourne in 1987. It is over 100 years old. It has a large compound which can take another building. The house has been occupied by a layman since there is nobody in formation there now. The layman still comes in, does his professional work from there but goes back to his family in the evening.

Fr. Ned Purcell came to Australia after many years in Sierra Leone as a missionary. He is still new to Australia, barely two years. He is bursar of the group. The group is considering accepting a new parish in the outskirts of Melbourne and he is being considered as parish priest.

The next day the 20th of December Fr. Ned and myself visited the proposed parish. We met the parish priest who took us round the church and school compound of the parish. He told us that the parish priest plays a big role in the school. In fact he is the actual administrator of the school quite unlike what obtains in some other dioceses of Australia. He also let us know that the parish has a big population of Vietnamese immigrants as well as some Filipinos and some Spanish speakers from South America. For this reason he has Mass in the parish in Spanish every Sunday and in Vietnamese every two weeks. He invites Spanish and Vietnamese speaking priests to come and say these Masses.

Archdiocese of Brisbane

Holy Spirit Parish, Strathpine: Fr. Paul Walsh C.S.Sp.

Holy Spirit parish, on Sparks Road, Bray Park was founded in 1974 when the then Archbishop Rush handed over this area to the Spiritans. Fr. Tom Crean was appointed first parish priest, and after purchasing land for Presbytery, church and school he took over and supervised the buildings. He and subsequent parish priests ad been missionaries at some stage in their pastoral life in Nigeria or Kenya. Fr. Des Reid came next followed by Fr. Gerry Gogan and now Fr. Paul Walsh who is the current parish priest.

The parish school has almost 500 pupils, boys and girls, the parish priest being responsible to the Archbishop for the school and the parish in general. The grounds of the parish church are a particular source of pride, being exceptional in the Archdiocese of Brisbane, all done through voluntary work.

It is estimated that there are around 10,000 Catholics in the parish but only one in ten regularly practices their faith. A small group of parishioners make up an Evangelisation Team, who visit homes of Catholics. In the parish also there is the hope, provided a confrere is appointed to the parish team consisting of Paul and a retired confrere Frank Comerford (81 years old) to investigate the possibility of establishing a Lay Associate membership. At this time the Arch-confraternity of the Holy Spirit exists, operating from Holy Spirit parish, with Fr. Paul as the Director. The membership is approximately 3000 Australia wide.

Spiritans have a very high profile in the Archdiocese. They are renowned for their loyalty to the diocese, heir active participation in the Deanery, and their willingness to be involved in all liturgical and pastoral initiatives proposed by the various Archdiocesan ministries. They are also renowned for their

missionary thrust and participation in the works of the Congregation in Western Australia, and Papua New Guinea where the parish had built a sister's convent and a parish house. This spirit needs to be revived and renewed. Fr. Paul has been parish priest here for 10 years and there is need for him to take a sabbatical. There is also an urgent need here for personnel. The parish is a Spiritan parish.

St. Michael's Parish, Dorrington:

Fr. Pat Doran C.S.Sp.

This is a small parish in an area of retired people. It has a population of about 400. In actual fact the bishop wanted to merge it with three other parishes and desired that the Spiritans run the merged parish but this has not worked out. The current parish priest is new to Australia and does not want to take on a big parish at this stage. Talks are still going on to find the best solution to the situation. There is a contract with the Bishop that is renewed every five years. Fr. Pat Doran took over as Parish Priest from Frank Comerford in October. Pat worked in Papua New Guinea for 15 years before coming to Australia. He is taking time to know the people and also to know how things are done in the Australian church. This is why he is slow at accepting to run the proposed amalgamated parish. He believes it will be too big for him because he has just turned 70 and also he is new to Australia. He is happy in the place and the people are happy with him too. He hopes to continue to help PNG from there.

Villa La Salle, Southport:

Fr. Gerry Gogan C.S.Sp.

Fr. Gerry Gogan (73 years) lives in this small town some one and half hours drive away from the Spiritan house at Strathpine. Villa La Salle is a retirement home of the La Salle Brothers. Gerry is here as the chaplain for the home. He has his own apartment but does most other things with the Brothers. He worked for many years in Nigeria and Sierra Leone before he came to Australia. He

is doing very well for his age and health. He comes regularly to Strathpine and Dorrington once a month for community with the confreres. He is in very good spirits and is still very committed to the missions by the contributions he makes to the various missions of the Congregation. He is the historian of the Australian group.

Diocese of Rockhampton

Woorabinda: Fr. Pat McGeever C.S.Sp.

This is a small aboriginal township in North Queensland. Fr. Pat arrived here in November 1999, and is still in a learning mode concerning Aboriginal Culture and Christianity. It is early days yet, and hopefully the Spiritan charism will unfold what the Lord has in mind for this mission.

Diocese of Parramatta

St. Monica's, North Parramatta Fr. Sean Lynskey C.S.Sp.

St. Monica's parish is in the heart of a busy commercial area in North Parrammatta. It is the mother parish of three other parishes that developed as a result of the foresight of a previous parish priest who bought the parish sites long before they were developed.

Fr. Gerry Ryan was the first Spiritan parish priest there for eight years and Sean took over from him in September 1999.

There are 4 Sunday weekend Masses. An average of four to four hundred and fifty attend Sunday Masses. There are about 2000 ex-Catholics in the area. They have a Catholic school in the parish with 140 children from about 70 families. There are only

about 10 families that attend Sunday Masses regularly.

Since he came, Sean has effected a lot of changes. Some were opposed by the parishioners at the beginning but now they have come to accept them. He has got the parishioners more involved in the affairs of the parish and in participating in the apostolate in the parish. Many have joined the music ministry and other forms of apostolate in the parish. He has a team of 15 people whom they call "Lost Sheep Team". They have reached out to families who are catholic and who have children in the school. Their task is to invite them to come and join their parish at Mass on Sundays and participate in the life of the parish. He also has a Bible Study Group. There is also a renewal programme that is sponsored by the "Couples for Christ". Most of the members of this group are Filipinos.

The parish is a multicultural one with a mixture of people from different countries. The dominant group is the Asians followed by the East Europeans. The Chinese have their own Mass in the parish every Sunday. This Mass is said by a Chinese priest who comes from outside. After the Mass they have gatherings and meetings followed by lunch in the school. They have quite a number for the Mass each Sunday.

The Bishop of the diocese has indicated that he will take back this parish when the current contract he has with the Spiritans expires sometime in 2002.

Fr. Gerry Ryan C.S.Sp.

Gerry was the parish priest of St. Monica's and after his sabbatical leave came back to the diocese and is there on a semi-retired basis. He is 70 years of age now and does not want a permanent job since he feels he may go on full retirement before

long. He has made himself available to the bishop of the diocese for any assignment that the bishop has no priest to undertake. He is like “a minister for special duties”. Presently he is filling in as chaplain in a hospital. He is happy with what he is doing and the bishop is happy to have him there when he needs him.

Fr. Paul Hopper C.S.Sp.

Paul belongs to the English province and worked in Nigeria for many years before he came to Australia. He is one of the youngest in the group (56). He lives with a diocesan priest in St. Matthew's parish Windsor some kilometres north of Parramatta. He says he is happy with his work in the parish. He says that having experienced a “vital” church in Nigeria he is presently fulfilled in the mission here in Australia by endeavouring to bring the spirit of that vital church to a church that is “flat”, “de-energised” and “apathetic”. He justifies his Spiritan presence in Windsor by seeking ways of re-evangelising the local church by involvement in:

- a) Adult Faith Education.
- b) Alpha/R.C.I.A. Programmes.
- c) Celebrating the Eucharist in 3 centres; 20, 42, 60 kilometres from Windsor.

Diocese of Bunbury

St. Joseph's Albany

Fr. Paschal Kearney C.S.Sp.

Albany is the oldest township in Western Australia, with a settled community since 1826. Originally a whaling base for itinerant whalers, it has become an important agricultural centre and, more recently, a popular tourist location. Albany is 403 kms. south of Perth by road and has a population of about 30,000 people. It is

the place of the arrival of the original members of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary and the presence of the missionaries in the area between 1846 and 1848 is commemorated in a stained glass window in Holy Family Church in the town. Since the recent discovery of the actual site of the residence of the original missionaries at Lake Mollalup, following research by two local priests, Frs. B. Dwyer and N. Fitzsimmons, there has been a renewed interest in having Spiritans work again in the diocese. Fr. Paschal Kearney, who ministered formally in Nigeria, Sierra Leone and The Gambia and for a short while at Ardbraccan in Ireland, was appointed to Albany following his arrival in Australia about a year ago. He lives in the parish residence together with a Malaysian student, Roy, who belongs to the diocese and is due for ordination to the diaconate and priesthood in 2001. There are two other retired priests, Frs. Dwyer and Galloway, also residing in the parish, who assist in ministry. The parish covers an extensive area – larger than the Province of Ulster in Ireland, from where Paschal originates – and included a second parish Church in the town as well as six out-stations. Although it is estimated that some 12% of the population of the parish is Catholic only about 3% practice. The parish itself has also 3 married deacons, with 2 others in training, and there is obviously very good lay participation in its life and ministry. Paschal is also a chaplain in the local maximum-security prison and takes pastoral care of the local Catholic School, St. Joseph's. He will be formally inducted as parish priest in January 2001 and is expecting a confrere from the EAP, Fr. Thomas Kessey, to join him in the near future.

Paschal feels there is a great need for faith-education and evangelisation in his own parish and has begun, with some success, to introduce small workshops based on models with which he was familiar in The Gambia aimed at evolving a more creative way of being Church. Over and above the appropriateness of Spiritan presence in the diocese due to the historical links with the Congregation, Paschal sees his work in

the prison, in particular, of giving him an opportunity of exercising a ministry very much in line with the Spiritan charism.

Diocese of Geraldton

Our Lady in Ara Caeli, Northampton

Fr. Des Reid C.S.Sp.

Fr. Tom Crean C.S.Sp.

Northampton is a small rural town of some 4000 inhabitants about 50 km north of Geraldton, the principal city in the mid-west, a port with a thriving lobster industry and an important agricultural and administrative centre. The people of Northampton are involved principally in agriculture and the area despite climatic difficulties and prolonged periods of drought, is a large producer of wheat, mainly for the export market. The parish itself covers an extensive area and in addition to the parish centre has four outstations, one of which is almost 400 km from the parish residence. There is also a Catholic school adjacent to the parish residence and a former convent building of the Presentation Sisters, which is now a heritage building. Both Des and Tom have ministered in Australia for many years – Tom since 1971 following expulsion from Nigeria after the war, and Des since 1979 after a short period in Kenya and subsequently several years in Rockwell College in Ireland. After many years in Eastern Australia both came to Geraldton diocese some 5 years ago realising the serious need for personnel and the missionary nature of ministry there. Both regret that they had not come to Western Australia earlier in view of the particular pastoral challenges it offers, which they see as being in line with the Spiritan charism.

At present both have a good community life together and, manage on the relatively small income from the parish, which is supplemented by some assistance from confreres working in the east. There are no paid employed employees in the service of the

parish and the confreres cater for themselves and, to some extent, also look after the maintenance of the parish buildings. Kevin Conway comes from time to time to assist in this regard. Apart from his commitments as parish priest Des also serves on ambulance duty in the area for a week every month, as does the local Anglican pastor. It is a service appreciated by the people and enables him sometimes to combine his medical and spiritual roles. Ministry also includes visits and occasional liturgies in the scattered farming homesteads and work with the Aboriginal community at Barrel Well. Des admits that the ministry among the Aborigines is particularly difficult especially owing to their different cultural perspective on time. Morning prayer is celebrated with a few members of the local community in Northampton. Both Des and Tom are obviously greatly appreciated by the people for their dedication and easy relations; Tom will certainly be missed in this regard.

Port Hedland

St. Cecilia's

Fr. Wally McNamara C.S.Sp.

St. John The Baptist

Fr. Neal Shank C.S.Sp.

Fr. Simon Emeanuo C.S.Sp

As the name suggests, Port Hedland is an important seaport on the north-west coast, some 1800 km by road or two hours by air from Perth. It is a centre for the export of bulk iron ore, mined in the region, to several countries around the globe; there is also a recently constructed ore processing plant and a salt production plant for industrial use. Although there is only a single administration, the town is effectively composed of two twin towns, Port Hedland and South Hedland, with a combined multi-ethnic population of about 15,000. There are two Catholic parishes, St. Cecilia's at Port Hedland and St. John The Baptist's at South Hedland, both entrusted to the Spiritans. Fr. Wally

McNamara, who worked formally in Sierra Leone, and for a short while with the Tobar project at Ardrbraccan in Ireland, has been parish priest of St. Cecilia's since 1992, a role he currently combines with that of Group Superior. Fr. Neal Shank of the Province of Trans Canada is parish priest of St. John The Baptist's and is assisted by Fr. Simon Emeanuo from the Province of Nigeria who arrived some three months ago on a two year sabbatical after many years of parish ministry in Nigeria and more recently as Spiritual Director at Ihiala. Neal, who ministered previously in Papua New Guinea, has a special responsibility for the Aboriginal people in the area, many of whom have a Catholic background dating back to the Kimberley and New Norcia missions but, have drifted away from the Church in recent decades. As in other areas the Aboriginal community suffers from a high unemployment rate, racial prejudice, addiction to drugs and alcohol and the breakdown of family life and traditional values. The urban Aboriginal population is located in South Headland but there are many small communities throughout the Pilbara and the Western Desert with nominal Catholic communities at Marble Bar (200 km away) and Yandeyarra (140 km away).

St. Cecilia's parish also includes the Immigration Reception and Processing Centre (IRPC) - a federal detention centre for boat people and illegal asylum seekers, with a capacity for some 700 residents. It offers particular pastoral challenges as many of the people are traumatised and they are detained in an inhospitable environment where an air of secrecy reigns. Wally experienced some difficulty of access at one stage but his protests to the Ministry for Immigration ensured that he has since been able to carry out his pastoral duties there. There is also a Stella Maris and Flying Angel Seafarers Centre in the parish catering for the crews of the bulk-carriers that enter the port. The parish priest is responsible for the Catholic pastoral care of both these centres as well as for the local Regional Hospital and the Catholic primary and middle school, St. Cecilia's. There are therefore many

opportunities for ministry of a typically Spiritan nature and the parish is an ideal location for a Spiritan community. There are two elderly Presentation Sisters resident in the convent adjacent to the presbytery who are still quite active in the life and ministry of St. Cecilia's and who have been particularly helpful to Wally since his arrival. Both parishes are financially viable but with little to spare; Neal receives a special allocation each year from Catholic Mission Australia (Propagation of the Faith) for his ministry with the Aboriginal community. There are some 150 people attending each parish church on a regular basis and about 30 families subscribing to the weekly planned giving contribution; however the actual Catholic population is much higher than these figures suggest. Simon is quite pleased with his ministry and his community life in South Hedland and would be disposed towards a more long-term appointment in Australia were he to be requested to stay and his Provincials to agree. Neal would like to become more fully involved in the Aboriginal ministry but his time is limited by the fact that he is currently parish priest at St. John's and both he and Simon often have to replace Wally when his role as Group Superior forces him to travel. He is also in demand as a counselor for people with substance abuse problems. The parishes do not employ any personnel but a number of volunteers assist in the office work and in the maintenance of the presbytery. There is obviously an excellent rapport between the confreres and the people. Morning Prayer and Mass are celebrated each day with a small group of very faithful parishioners.

APPENDIX 1.A. Ballarat.

Twelve Holy Spirit Fathers worked in Ballarat at the Holy Ghost College, now St. Patrick's College, from 1889 - 92.

The venture failed because of a) sickness, b) a breakdown of community life between German, French and Irish confrères and c) the lack of communication and proper contact with the whimsical Bishop Moore. All of these happenings compelled them to leave the college in 1892.

Some of the Irish Confrères stayed on in Australia, working in various dioceses, some becoming incardinated.

I include some paragraphs on some of these men taken from the book "From Abel to Zarubabel" - an account of the priests who ministered in Australia from the first days of colonisation until 1900 AD.

GROUP 12 HOLY GHOST FATHERS C.S.Sp.

- (A) Introduced to Perth Mission by Bishop John Brady (1846).
- (B) Personnel of the Ballarat Foundation (1889-92).
- (C) Unattached volunteers. (S) Secularised.

BOUCHET	Maurice	(A)
BRENNAN	Patrick	(B)
CAREY	Bernard	(B) Later Syd.
CORCORAN	William Henry	(C) (S)
CROACH	Martin	(B)
CURRAN	Peter	(C)
GRIFFIN	Carol Naish	(B)
GRIFFIN	Gerald Joseph	(C) (S)
LEE	George	(B)
LEINTNGER	Louis	(B)
LEMIRE	Achille James	(B)
LEVADOUX	Michael	(B)
REFFE	Edward Joseph	(B)
SCHMIDT	Christian	(B)
STEPHENS	John E.	(B) Formerly Melb.
THEVAUX	Francis	(A)
THIERSE	Joseph	(A)
TUOHY	Jeremy	(B)

COMMENTARY Help in compiling list has been given by Fr. John Ryan C.S.Sp., Blackrock College Dublin. Total of list: 18. Effective ministry 18.

APPENDIX 1.B. Ballarat

As well as the Group of Holy Ghost fathers staffing the college at Ballarat, the bishop also had asked for some fathers to staff the parish of Maryborough.

Here is their story, taken from a project of the Parish in 2002, tracing its early history.

St Augustine's Catholic Church, Maryborough

"A new departure was now introduced by the bishop, who decided to entrust the parish to a Religious Order – the Holy Ghost Fathers, who had come that year to Ballarat, mainly to take charge of St. Patrick's College in that city. In Feb. 1889, two of these fathers, the Revs. A. Lemire, and Griffin arrived to take charge of Maryborough, the former to be pastor.

A serious calamity soon befell them, for a month after his arrival, Fr. Griffin died, and was buried in Maryborough. F. Reffe took his place.

Fr. Lemire, a very young and energetic man. At once set to work to reduce the debt on the presbytery, and by the end of first year, raised £ 500. In March 1890, an Art Union made £ 220, and the St. Patrick's night concert yielded another £ 40. Thus in 18 months he had reduced the debt from £ 900 to £ 140. The balance was paid off within six months. He made improvements to the churches at Timor and Avoca; began collecting for another church to be built at Majorca, and at a cost of £ 225 erected a wooden church at Eddington, which was opened by Bishop Moore on Nov. 16th 1890. The site for the latter was given by Mr. T. Ryan. Eighty children were confirmed on the occasion. Prior to the

erection of the Eddington church, Fr. Lemire raised nearly £ 2,000.

In January 1892 The Holy Ghost Fathers were recalled from Ballarat diocese by their Superior, so Fr. Lemire and his assistant, went also. Fr. Reffe was in the parish from March 1889 to June 1890; Fr. M. Croagh from Feb. 1890 to Sept. 1891; Fr. Tuohy in Jan. and Feb. 1891; Fr. M. Levodany in April and May 1891; Fr. J. E. Stephens from May to Oct. 1891; and Fr. Lemire himself from Feb. 3, 1889 to Jan 18, 1892.

Fr. Lemire by no means forget the most important part of a priest's work, the spiritual welfare of his people, and by retreats and sodalities did much to promote it. He died in Trinidad in 1894, where he had been president of a college. He was a good linguist, and as is evidenced, even now by, by the number of Maryborough homes where his photograph may be seen, was very popular.

C211 CURRAN, Peter Very Rev. C.S.Sp. Irish

TRAGIC END BY FALLING INTO FIRE

From a missionary career in Egypt as a Holy Ghost Father, to the Sale Diocese, where a building complex at Maffra stands to his eternal credit . . . that's the story of Peter Curran, builder, administrator, pastor - even if at betimes he was at loggerheads with his Bishop. Very likely he had left the Holy Ghost Order when he came to Sale, and doesn't strictly meet the A to Z test of arrival prior to the end of 1900. Details of his origin and education are unclear. All that is known is that he hailed from County Mayo and that he was a student of Theology at Le Mans and Paris. First years in Sale were spent on the Cathedral staff, during which (probably from 1910) he was Administrator. Maffra parish became his assignment in 1915 and at the same time he was appointed Diocesan Chancellor. The first church that he

sponsored at Maffra still does service as a parish hall; the second, opened in 1924, is a specious and imposing edifice in brick. A two-storied brick presbytery, bulky enough to be a Cathedral Presbytery, also stands to his credit. At what stage and for what reason he was at odds with authority is unknown, but at the same time he must have been held in high regard on a diocesan level. Among other positions of trust: secretary for the diocese at the Sydney Eucharistic Congress in 1928. On 28th October 1930, while reclining near the fire in the presbytery sitting room he suffered a severe stroke and partial cremation. The charred remains were interred in the Maffra Cemetery.

INFORMATION: Mgr. P. S. Crowe, Nazareth House, Camberwell.

C190 CROAGH, Martin Very Rev. C.S.Sp. Irish

IN THE BALLARAT HOLY GHOST COMMUNITY

1892 marks the departure of the Holy Ghost community from Victoria and 1978 marks their return to pastoral activities in Melbourne. A sincere welcome to their community after an absence of 86 years! Martin Croagh was a 'roaring Tipp' being born in the town of Clonoulty, a place that vies with any other for the number of servants it has supplied to the Australian Mission in the last century. The birth date given by Fr. John Ryan C.S.Sp., the writer's Dublin contact, is 11 November 1856. The brilliant student showed great promise in his Rockwell College days from '72 to '79, and later when he studied in France and Rome. Ordination took place in 1883 and Profession in 1884. He was given a teaching appointment at a Paris Seminary and apparently remained at the post until answering the call to come with other Holy Ghost Fathers to Ballarat and found what was virtually the first St. Patrick's College, and take over the pastoral care of the Maryborough parish. Father Martin spent two years at this latter assignment. Then late in 1891, about six months before the Order

packed baggage and returned to France, he was called on to rescue the declining fortunes of the College. The decline was due to several factors. Foremost, a parsimonious Bishop, James Moore. As well the failure of the German and French personnel to become familiar with Australian youth and their ways, and the loss of two promising members of the Order, John Brennan and Carol Naish Griffin. The latter had succumbed to the raw climatic conditions; the rest were often laid low with winter illnesses. Croagh scarcely had a chance to better the situation, which Bishop Moore blamed on the first Principal, Father Reffe. And so with relations embittered the Order left our shores in March 1892. It was a great loss to Australia, especially in the departure of men of high academic standing, such as Croagh and Achilles Lemire - recognised in France and on the Continent as theologian and writer of merit. Some of the men of the Ballarat dispersion later went to Port of Spain, Trinidad, and to the U.S.A. Martin Croagh gave ten years of service in Trinidad before seeking retirement.

C26 CAREY, Bernard C.S.Sp Irish.
(F.P. Vol.2, No.!)

VERY EXPERIENCED HOLY GHOST FATHER

An old newspaper printed near Ballarat. The 'Gordon Advertiser' refers to Bernard as being a most capable teacher while he was stationed the Holy Ghost College (a forerunner of St. Patrick's) in Ballarat, from '88 to '90. We might add that he would seem to be a very experienced missionary as well, having given service in many places later mentioned. He was born on 28 May 1865 in Ratheale, County Limerick, being the child of James and Margaret (nee O'Malley). He studied at Rockwell College, County Tipperary, and at Blackrock College, Dublin, training centres in particular for entrants to the Holy Ghost congregation. He was ordained in 1887 or 1888, and arrived with the first contingent of Holy Ghost Fathers on 4 November 1888 by steamship 'Ormuz'. The story of the Holy Ghost Fathers in

Ballarat is a sad one. Deaths of young men conflicts among themselves, and a sturdy argument with the irascible reigning Bishop, James Moore, made their stay a short one, of less than three years. Bernard returned to Blackrock College in 1890. He then seems to have left the Order and to have joined the Archdiocese of Sydney. Directory tracings: St.Benedict (1892), St.Mary's (1898). For a period he was secretary to Cardinal Moran. He rejoined his Order in 1899 and gave 32 years of service in Ireland, Zanzibar, U.S.A., and Trinidad. And there he met his end on 22 November 1932, at the age of 67.

REF: Father John Ryan C.S.Sp
Blackrock College, Dublin.

C157 CORCORAN, William Henry C.S.Sp. Irish
 (F.P. Vol. 2, No.11) (L.O.?)
OF WHOM NOT MUCH IS KNOWN.

Date and place of birth are given as 3 October 1865 at Ballinasloe in County Galway. The father's name was William and a question mark accompanies the mother's name as Marianne Banks. If we could assume that Banks was meant to read Burke, and that his parents had moved from Tipperary to Galway it could be inferred that he was a brother of Thomas Vincent Corcoran OSA (C1 56). What is certain is that he was educated at Blackrock College, Dublin, by the Holy Ghost Fathers, and after joining their ranks was professed in 1896. Ordination followed, and for some reason he became secularised in 1899. A note before me suggests that he came to Tasmania in 1900, but this appears dubious. Certainly he was in Puhoi in the Dunedin Diocese in 1900, remaining until 1905 -- the longest stay in any one place. The Directory tracings then suggest a man constantly on the move or being moved: South Dunedin (1906) (1907); Ngaruawahia (Auckland Diocese) (1907); Mount Magnet (Geraldton Diocese) (1909); Northampton (ditto) (1910); then back to Dundee (1912) (1915). According to

Fr John Ryan C.S.Sp., Blackrock College, Dublin, he died that year in England. But this seems contradicted by the Dunedin Necrology of Priests drawn up by Fr Peter Mee, Archivist and Chancellor. In that document the year of death is assigned as 18 December 1957 if that information is correct, the age at death was a fulsome 92. So the present writer rejoices in not attempting to trace movements between 1915 and 1957.

REF: MD1IC File, Torquay,

Per Fr John Ryan, Blackrock College and Fr Peter Mee. Dunedin

BRENNAN, Patrick C.S.Sp. Irish B105
(F.P. Vol. 1, No. 8)

GREAT ATHLETE AND POPULAR TEACHER

b.Freshford, Co. Kilkenny 1857; ed.B'rock & Royal Uni.Coll.,Dublin; ord. '87. Arr. Melb. with others in Holy Ghost community to serve education needs in Ballarat on the 'Ormuz', 9.11.'88. Very popular as a teacher and for his athletic prowess. He died of pneumonia at tile age of 34 on 28. 11. 1891 - His death was the last straw in breaking down a community that the whimsical Bishop Moore compelled to leave in February 1892. Ref. :MDHC File, Torquay, compiled through the courtesy of Fr. John Ryan C.S.Sp. Blackrock Coll., Dublin.

APPENDIX 2. Western Australia.

Spiritans retrace original French members W.A. steps from 150 years ago.

A Feature from the West Australian Catholic Record, April 17th 1997, which tells of the return to their origins of the Spiritans 150 years since they first arrived in Australia. This pilgrimage took place during the First Spiritan Oceania Assembly held at Safety Bay, W.A. April 2nd – 11th 1997.

In April, members of the Spiritans congregations returned to Mollyallup to retrace the footsteps of their very first members in Western Australia 150 years ago. Colleen McGuinness-Howard reports.

The pilgrimage in April of 23 Spiritans, joined by other priests, religious, and a large lay contingent, following the route of the original French missionaries (then known as the Missionaries of the Holy Heart of Mary) in WA 150 years ago, was memorable.

It was also unifying, and in a way therapeutic, because of the high hopes the five original Frenchmen had set out with, in contrast to the circumstances of their stay and departure.

Later known as the Holy Ghost Fathers and now the Spiritans, members came from throughout the world in early April to meet together and take part in retracing the steps their first men had taken. In their desire to bring God's word to King Sound (Albany), but actually, Lake Mollyallup and in the interior.

The site of the Sancta Maria, the primitive hut built by the early missioners in 1846 was abandoned in 1847 when the mission failed because of adverse trials and tribulations.

The last two members departed Australia in 1848.

Thus with the ravages of time and a tiny population too busy

eking out a living to record such details, Sancta Maria's location was lost in time.

However owing to the industry and interest of Fathers Noel Fitzsimons and Bernie Dwyer, they found an 80 year old farmer, who as a child had been shown the site by an Aboriginal, "who carried the memory of the sacred place of the first missionaries," recounted Port Hedland Spiritan. Fr Walter McNamara.

With only two small mounds of stone remaining, they dug beneath what transpired to be the fireplace, and under about 12 inches of dirt, found in the ashes two pairs of beads.

On the reverse side of the metal crucifix attached to the large pair of beads, was stamped the figure of Our Lady and the words Mere de Dieu Priez Pour Nous (Mother of God pray for us.)

So this year the Spiritans returned to Victoria Square for Mass at St John's Pro Cathedral, where their forebears had heard Mass in January 1846 before their departure, on foot, to Albany.

At Kojonup where Bishop Brady had wanted the French to settle, Fr McNamara contrasted Bishop Brady's statement that there would be "food and provisions in abundance" and where in reality they found nothing and no one, except six hundred soldiers, to the wonderful lunch put on by the parish of Kojonup.

Then to Albany where they were received by parish priest Fr Hugh Galloway and the Holy Family church for Mass, which boasts a commemorative window of their first endeavours incorporating the Sancta Maria hut and the recovered Rosary Beads.

At their first Mass there in 1846, paralleled Fr McNamara, there were six Catholics, from the good-hearted Mooney family, one other, and two Protestants, "whereas for our visit the church was packed."

The original missionaries were on the brink of starvation and saved providentially three times by the miracle of the frogs, a French whaling ship, and a bag of flour, he noted.

Billeted by Albany parishioners, the next day all journeyed to Lake Mollyalup where a party of about 400 processed to the site of the Sancta Maria.

Fr Michael Dziedzic of Mt Barker had prepared the liturgy for the Rosary procession and carrying of the cross, which was carried initially by the priests, then handed to laity.

The first three joyful Mysteries were interspersed with bible readings and notes of the French missionaries.

The fourth and fifth mysteries were the Sorrowful, which were interspersed with the sufferings the missionaries had endured, culminating in the installation of the cross planted on a small adjacent hill overlooking the site.

Mass was celebrated by Bishop Peter Quinn, aided by the Spiritans and other clergy, after which the priests were treated to a picnic lunch by the Mt Barker parishioners.

Their experience would be treasured, Fr McNamara said, "and the clarion call of Maxine Fumagalli in her most moving poem, for us to return to work with her Aboriginal people, as well as the affirmation of the bishops and people - is an invitation that won't be Ignored."

Erratic bishop, starvation, dogged missionaries' first attempts

By Colleen McGuinness-Howard

The history of the Spiritans in Western Australia - has swung hill circle. Their involvement with Western Australia began in the mid 19th century when Francis Libermann, a convert from Judaism who'd founded his French Congregation of the Holy Heart of Mary Society in 1842, was approached by Bishop Brady to send men to join him in his Swan River Colony (Western Australia).

However when priests Abbe Maurice Bouchet (about 30 years old), Abbe Francois Thevaux (26), Abbe Francois Thierse (31), and brothers Frere Vincent Eusebe and Frere Theodore Odon arrived in Perth on 9 January, 1846, their first set-back was the death of Abbe. Bouchet who died 15 days later of sunstroke. The Frenchmen were then sent down to their mission - on foot from Perth - and were given the princely sum of thirty Australian pounds.

They were forced out of Albany by Bishop Brady, who wanted them to live in the bush, decreeing they were only allowed to evangelise Aborigines.

To establish this new mission, they only had the most meagre resources.

They also discovered Bishop Brady had considerably exaggerated the native population.

The Frenchmen opted for Lake Mollyalup and built a split logs and paper bark basic hut from local trees which they named the Sancta Maria.

The four missionaries later reduced to three with the departure for

Perth of Frere Theodore, were on a sure path to starvation, and by mid 1847 had to eat wild herbs and abandoned animals from Albany.

They also had to use sheets from their beds to make clothes with and make all their journeys barefoot.

Their plight was relayed to Bishop Brady by Abbe Thierse on 6 June that year, but, Abbe Thevaux had fallen out of favour with Bishop Brady who promptly excommunicated him for "disobedience and irreverence" towards the bishop.

Abbe Thevaux made the trip to Perth departing Albany on 25 February and arriving 14 March, 1847

Meanwhile, arriving back to the Sancta Maria on the 4 April, he brought bread to the destitute Abbe Thierse and Frere Vincent, who had used up all credit with the Albany store and could not obtain food from anyone.

Near to starvation during his absence, Abbe Thierse and Frere Vincent had prayed to St Joseph who on March 19, his feast day, answered by sending a huge number of frogs which they could easily catch and eat.

After imparting the news from Bishop Brady that they were to leave, with heavy hearts the little trio abandoned the Sancta Maria on 16 June 1847 to make the trek into Albany for their departure from Australia.

With their bundled possessions, they walked for three days but it was to be another year before Abbe Thierse finally left Albany with Br Vincent, arriving to join Fr Thevaux in Mauritius in 1848.

And thus ended the first Australian mission of the Missionaries of the Holy Heart of Mary.

The Record, April 17 1997 Page 9

CELEBRATING OUR HOMECOMING

LAKE MOLLYALALUP

From far off places they had journeyed
Those gentle servants of God appeared,
Forsaking personal homes and comforts
Their commitment to love
In the service of needs.

The lake is still calling,
It beckons and sighs
Rekindles our spirits
Like sparks in a fire'

"They came and they suffered",
It seems to say
"but I have been waiting
To greet you today.

The prayers of those faithful
Encompass my shores,
And call through the night
To their Godand yours.

In their spirit of commitment
I implore you, to come,
To take up the challenge
Of where they begun.

Take up the Lord's cross,
That was their heart's desire,
For miracles await,
That are ours to inspire.'

This is a poem by Maxime Formugalli an Aboriginal Elder, voiced on the occasion of the pilgrimage to Lake Mollylalup, where the first Spiritans worked in Australia.

LAKE MOLLAYALUP

Mollyalup, still waters
Seed of faith Life:
The Spirit Lord calling
From His Holy Land afar,
The same Sprit answering,
Quickening Libermann's sons
Of Mary's Holy Heart,
Their mother's sorrows undergoing,
In faith and obedience
To make real
This version now revealed
150 years on.

With great joy
Living and reaping
This harvest of Christ's love
Surprisingly overwhelmingly;
A trail, -
Coming to full circle
Joined in pilgrimage
With Eucharistic loving
A dream come true.

The present children of this seed
Calling again
That we be always open
To our Divine Spirit Patron
In this grace filled time.

Safety Bay, April 1997

Written by Gerard Gogan C.S.Sp., expressing the vision of Fr. Libermann by the present day Spiritans on the same occasion of our homecoming to Australia.

SILVER JUBILEE OF SPIRITANS IN AUSTRALIA, 1996

It is now 25 years since the Spiritans arrived in Brisbane, in 1971. Since then, we have been staffing 10 Parishes in 4 of the 7 States/Territories of Australia. As well as the present Spiritans working here, there have been quite a few others who have spent various periods of different lengths of time working here.

SPIRITANS APPOINTED TO AUSTRALIA

1971 Fr. George Lahiffe Fr. Tom Byrne Fr. Tom Crean	1990 Fr. Gerry Ryan
1974 Fr. Val O'Brien Fr. James Murray Fr. Tom Cunningham	1991 Fr. Peter Newman Fr. Alan Collins
1977 Fr. Hugh Fagan Fr. Con Peelo Fr. Ronan Grimshaw Fr. Sean O'Connell	1992 Fr. Jimmie Smith Fr. Frank Comerford Fr. Walter McNamara
1978 Fr. Gerry Gogan	1993 Fr. Brian O'Mahony
1979 Fr. Des Reid	1994 Fr. Paul Hopper
1980 Fr. Alfred Chamberlain	1998 Fr. Neal Shank Fr. Sean Lynsky Fr. Ned Purcell
1988 Fr. Paul Walsh	1999 Fr. Pat McGeever Fr. Pat Doran Fr. Paschal Kearney
1989 Fr. Ray O'Neill Fr. Michael Daly	2000 Fr. Simon Emeanuo

TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS/HOLIDAY

REPLACEMENTS ETC

Fr. Pat McGeever	Fr. Noel Redmond
Fr. Gerry Scott	Fr. Lloyd Rebeyro
Fr. Frank Lavery	Fr. Joe Sheehan
Fr. John Joe McDonagh	Fr. Peter McEntire
Fr. Tom Nash	Fr. Roddy Curran
Fr. Michael Doyle	

Deceased Spiritans from the above list:-

- Fr. James Murray, Queensland, died 1988
- Fr. George Lahiffe, Queensland, died 1993
- Fr. Con Peelo, Victoria and Queensland, died 1993
- Fr. Peter Newman, Queensland, died 1993
- Fr. Michael Daly, Victoria, died 1998

Post script:-

As we Spiritans continue our mission here in Australia, changes inevitably have occurred.

We saw the Parish of Ringwood returning to diocesan administration in 1995, then in 2002, the Parish of Northampton return to Geraldton administration, and the Parish of Parramatta likewise returning to diocesan administration.

There have been changes in personnel.

Fr. Tom Crean, one of the founding members of this mission, which began here in 1971, retired to Ireland in 2001.

Fr. Neal Shank returned to Trans-Canada, also in 2001.

In Australia, Fr. Gerry Ryan was reassigned to St. Mary Magdalen's, Kenthurst, and Fr. Paul Hopper to St. Joseph's Kingswood, both in Paramatta Diocese.

Fr. Des Reid to Port Hedland, still in Geraldton Diocese.

Fr. Wally McNamara, our Congregational Leader, to reside at Broadmeadows. Fr. Sean Lynsky to Pine Rivers, and Fr. Paul Walsh on sabbatical.

Newcomers to Australia. Fr. Phil Doyle to Albany, Fr. Thomas Kessy to South Hedland, Fr. Rogation Msami to Pine Rivers. We also welcome Frs. Jude Agorchukwu and Bernard Amah from Nigeria to our Group.

So far so good! Towards 2003!

Gerard Gogan C.S.Sp.
Southport, Queensland

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To the Ends of the Earth, A General History of the Congregation
of the Holy Ghost.

Fr. Henry J. Koren C.S.Sp.

Pilgrimage – Perth to Lake Mollyalup via Albany

April 5th – 6th, 1997

Fr. Noel Fitzsimons P.P.

General Bulletins of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost.

Contributions from the archives of the Christian Brothers College
of St. Patrick, Ballarat.

Aknowledgement

This work would not have been possible without the assistance of my brother Tom, and his son Gerard Gogan. Their untiring efforts and computing skills in collating a myriad of historical information was invaluable.

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